5. Chief Secretaries of States have been requested to help in educating road users about safety precautions at level crossings and for exercising strict checks while issuing driving licences.

6. Joint Ambush Checks with civil authorities are conducted to nab errant road vehicle drivers under the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 and the Railways Act, 1989.

7. Involvement of village Panchayats in the railways public awareness programmes.

8. Putting up level crossing safety posters at village Panchayat Offices and at retail petrol pumps.

9. The unmanned level crossings are progressively being manned in a phased manner. Although the initial cost of manning of unmanned Level Crossing, has to be borne by the Road authority concerned and annual operating & maintenance cost is to be borne by the Railway. Considering the serious consequences of the accidents at unmanned Level Crossings, Railway has sanctioned manning of 4 unmanned level crossings identified as hazardous, at its own cost. No proposals for Manning of other unmanned level crossings have been received from the State Govt/Road authority concerned who have to bear initial capital cost of the same.

Railways have also decided to man equal number of Level Crossing at its. own cost as are manned through funds from MPLADS as per the recommendations of Hon'ble MPs.

Time limit for settlement ef railway compensation cases

2863. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the time usually taken for payment of compensation to victims of rail accident; and

(b) the action taken to settle the cases at the earliest preferably within a fortnight?

„ THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) Payment of compensation is arranged through cheque normally within IS days of the award made by Railway Claims Tribunal on the claim application filed by victims or relations of accident victims.

(b) The instructions are being reiterated to Zonal Railways to strictly adhere to this time frame.

Rail booking through internet

2864. SHRI K.M. SAJPULLAH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Railways are planning to introduce rail bookings through internet in major cities;

(b) if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) the names of cities where this facility would be provided?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The modalities for Internet based rail booking for reserved accommodation are getting worked out and would be first tested as a pilot project to firm up the modalities. The extension of the facility to various cities would arise only on the basis of the experience gained from the pilot project.

Action on MPs' letter to Ministry of Railways

2865. SHRI SURYABHAN PATIL VAHADANE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Ministry of Railways is not taking any action on the MPs' letters; if so, the reasons therefor; and

(b) how many letters have been received for transfer of Railways personnel from Eastern Railway to other Zones/offices or DLW, Varanasi since 1999, till date?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) No, Sir. Does not arise.

(b) Total 230 letters have been received from MPs since 1999.

Acquisition of land at Eravipuram Railway Station

2866. SHRI N. K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:.

(a) what was the purpose of acquiring 30 cents of land adjacent to Eravipuram railway station in Kollam, and how much money has been spent for the said acquisition of land;